



# June Wellness:

## Walking to Improve Your Health

*Walking is an excellent physical activity to implement if you would like to improve your overall health. The benefits of walking spread across physical, emotional and mental health.*

Some of these benefits include: healthy weight maintenance, improved mood, increased energy levels, stronger bones, increased muscle strength, reduced anxiety, reduced stress levels and prevention and management of various health conditions.

To safely gain the benefits of walking, begin putting a routine together gradually. As you become comfortable, begin to increase frequency, length of time and intensity to gain additional benefits. As you begin to walk faster and further, you will be increasing aerobic activity, which helps in burning calories, maintaining weight and improving heart health.

*To add variety and increase benefits, interval training can be implemented into your walks.*

Interval training consists of alternating between brisk walking and slower walking. Interval training has been shown to improve fitness in a time-efficient way. You may find that you enjoy adding this type of training into your routine a few times per week. For additional information on interval training, click here: [Interval Training for Heart Health](#)

*For your walk to truly be a fitness workout, consider your walking technique. Points to consider:*

- ~ Position of your head and focus: Keep your head up, and look forward.
- ~ Relaxation of your upper body: Keep your neck, shoulders and upper back relaxed.
- ~ Arm Swing: Keep your arms slightly bend at the elbows and swing freely. Pump slightly if you would like to increase intensity.
- ~ Core Engagement: Try to engage your core by slightly contracting your abdominals muscles.
- ~ Foot Strike: Take smooth strides, rolling each foot from heel to toe. (Be sure to wear proper walking sneakers for your fitness walks.)

*General points to consider before implementing a walking fitness routine:*

- ~ Clothing: The best choice is weather-appropriate, loose-fitting and moisture-wicking. Reflective gear is recommended if it is dark out.
- ~ Safety: Be sure to tell someone where you are going if you going to be walking alone. Look for routes that are well-lit and located in safe areas.
- ~ Pre and Post Workouts: As with all exercise routines, be sure to incorporate a warm-up, a cool-down and stretches into your workout.

*For more information on walking as fitness from the Mayo Clinic, including tips for setting goals, staying motivated and tracking your progress, please click here:*

**[Walking: Trim Your Waistline, Improve Your Health](#)**